

#### 4 – The Ursulines: 1790-1794

During the French Revolution, the community in Valenciennes had to face many difficulties, like all the other religious communities. In 1789, Catholicism was still the State religion in France, a country with a long Christian tradition.

On February 13, 1790, all monastic Orders were abolished. In Valenciennes, they closed the convents, and their buildings were considered as national properties. On April 3, 1792, the Ursuline convent was sold.

In September 1792, the Ursulines left for Mons, the monastery that founded them. On the first of October, 1792, all the houses held by religious communities were emptied and sold.

In the war between France and Austria, Valenciennes was a leading goal. It was one of the four cities defending the Northern boundary and blocking the way to Paris.

This border area had to endure the successive control of military forces. On November 6, 1792, with a French victory at Jemappes by Dumouriez, the city of Mons was annexed. On March 3, 1793, after the victory of Austria at Neerwinden, Valenciennes and Mons came again under Austrian power.



Green Piazza: Column of the 1793 defense – statue of a winged victory by Gujstave Crauk.

Valenciennes was besieged for a long period of time by General Ferrand. On November 11, 1793, the Ursulines returned to Valenciennes. The convent and school were in a sad state.



The Gate of Mons, after the 1793 siege. (J Farrington)

On June 26, 1794, Jourdan obtained a victory for the French troops in Fleurus. Once again, they took over Valenciennes.



« The pediment of the Town Hall in Valenciennes is a fine symbol of the city's resistance.»